

PROPOSAL FOR BURFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL TO CONVERT TO ACADEMY STATUS WITHIN THE OXFORD DIOCESAN SCHOOLS TRUST – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

What is an Academy?

Academies are state maintained schools free to all children. They have to follow the same rules as all other state-funded schools over admissions, pupils with Special Educational Needs and exclusions. They are still inspected by Ofsted.

Although academies do not have to follow the national curriculum this is unlikely to have any impact on the way that education is currently delivered in the school as a balanced curriculum which is judged against national standards, must be provided.

Not all academies are the same. We see no need for change to the day to day running of our school and we think that becoming an academy now within the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust is the best way to ensure that we can do that. Our community status will be protected within the terms

Academies are companies limited by guarantee which means that it does not pay dividends and nobody makes a profit – so all the money is spent on the academy's activities. But this structure means that the Academy is a legal entity which can enter into contracts and employ staff.

What is the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust?

The Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST) has been established by the Diocese of Oxford as a company to be responsible for a number of academies. The Directors have an agreement with the Secretary of State for Education to support and manage a number of individual academies.

ODST supports schools so that school staff can concentrate on continuing to deliver the highest standards of teaching and care to all pupils. This support is given through central services which are funded through a 5% top slice from the academy's income. ODST academies will automatically be provided with a Service Level Agreement that includes support with the curriculum, school improvement, HR advice, finance software, training and advice, governance, premises and appeals.

Responsibility for leadership and management of each Academy remains with the governing body and the head teacher. The Academy Trust will appoint a majority of the governing body and there will continue to be elected parent and staff governors.

ODST Vision

At the heart of the ODST vision is the belief in educational excellence; the belief that ODST is called to serve pupils, staff, parents and their local community by providing academies with the highest levels of academic rigour and pastoral care. Academies are places where children and young people develop and thrive intellectually, socially, culturally and spiritually.

ODST academies teach a broad and balanced curriculum within national guidelines. Focusing on core skills, this is designed to ensure that all pupils reach their academic

potential and seeks to enrich their experience along the way. Pupils are enabled to succeed in an atmosphere of high expectation, aspiring to educational excellence.

ODST is committed to sustaining high quality schools, and supporting schools in need of specific improvement. They set out to recruit and retain staff of the highest quality and to offer them the working conditions they need to give of their best as they serve the pupils in their care. They work in partnership with families so that students can be engaged and effective learners.

ODST seek to embody the Christian experience of community, where gifts are shared without counting the cost, where the emphasis is on what can be contributed, rather than on what might be received, and where each is given according to need.

As a limited company operating within the family of the Diocese of Oxford, ODST are motivated by Christian values to serve local communities. But they do not impose those values. Admissions policies are open, and priority is normally given to children in the local area.

ODST welcome those of all faiths and none, and are proud of the ethnic diversity within their academies.

What impact will this have on Burford Primary School?

Governors believe this will have a very positive impact and we are confident the relationship and benefits will develop over time. Membership of the ODST will help to secure the future of our school.

We will not make any major changes. There will be no change to the uniform, the admissions arrangements or to the times of the school day or terms. All children and all members of staff will continue to be part of the school and staff terms and conditions are protected in law.

So why make the change?

Academy status gives us some additional flexibility in deciding how best to meet the needs of your children. The Government and the local authority have made clear that they believe all schools should convert to Academy status and we want to manage how that happens for our school.

When will these changes take place?

We want to know what parents and the local community think about this proposal. The next few months will be very busy as we continue to seek guidance and clarification, including meetings with the local authority, analysis and settlement of accounts and budgets, negotiation of key support services, financial preparation and asset registration and legal matters. The Trust will support us in these processes and if all goes well we anticipate conversion during the current school year.